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INFO-ALERT brings to your attention a selection of abstracts of current articles and new materials from American publications on current political, economic, social issues and trends in the United States. These materials are available upon request from the **Information Resource Center**.

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POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. ASIA'S RISE

Minxin Pei

Foreign Policy, July/August 2009, 5 pages

According to Minxin Pei, Senior Associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, sustained and rapid economic growth in Asia since World War II has undeniably boosted the region's economic output and military capabilities. Is Asia's rise unstoppable? Will Asia lead the world in innovation? Is the power shifting from West to East? The author discusses the ongoing debate on the perceived decline of America and the dawn of a new Asian age.

2. THE CONSEQUENCES OF DEMOCRATIZATION

Giovanni Carbone

Journal of Democracy, April 2009, 15 pages

For the past few decades, scholars have been focusing on the causes of democratization. Now it is time to devote systematic attention to analyzing the costs and benefits that democracy brings. The author discusses democracy and its impact on the world, analyzing the likely specific consequences of a transition to democracy, and assessing whether there are significant drawbacks which could be expected from such a transition.

3. THE CHINA-U.S. RELATIONSHIP GOES GLOBAL

Kenneth Lieberthal

Current History, September 2009, 7 pages

The elevation of the global economy and climate change to the top of the bilateral agenda introduces new opportunities and perils into the relationship. "If the two sides can engage effectively..., Sino-U.S. relations will enter a new stage in which ties will become deeper, stronger, more stable, and more important for the international system than ever before," writes Kenneth Lieberthal, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and Business Administration at the University of Michigan.

4. **GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY: A STRATEGY FOR THE NEW AMERICAN PRESIDENT**

Holly Benner

The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, Winter/Spring 2009, 23 pages

Holly Benner, Assistant Director of the Managing Global Insecurity (MGI) Project at the Brookings Institution, discusses why the moment is ripe for the United States and President Obama in particular, to redefine American leadership for the 21st century. She offers a four-track path for accomplishing the task, urging President Obama partner with global powers to build an international security system.

5. **PACIFIC ASIA AND THE ASIA PACIFIC: THE CHOICES FOR APEC**

C. Fred Bergsten

Policy Brief 09-16, July 2009, 5 pages

Fred Bergsten, Director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, assesses the record of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) over the 20 years of its existence and discusses the global environment in which APEC is likely to be operating over the next 20 years. The brief focuses on the major change in global institutional arrangements implied by the replacement of the "Group of Seven/Eight" (G-7/8) by the "Group of Twenty" (G-20) as the chief steering committee for the global economy. The increasingly central role of an informal and de facto "Group of Two" (G-2) between China and the United States is also examined.

6. **CHARM OFFENSIVE**

Dayo Olopade

The American Prospect, July/August 2009, 4 pages

Dayo Olopade, the Washington reporter for TheRoot.com, examines the diplomatic strategy of the Obama administration in managing the expectations of his political base. Some of the proposed initiatives are explored, including staying connected with supporters outside Washington, and holding summits to discuss various issues.

7. **GLOBALIZATION IN RETREAT**

Roger C. Altman

Foreign Affairs, July/August 2009, 6 pages

Roger Altman, former U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary, examines declines in global trade, capital flows, and immigration, focusing on the lasting effects of the global economic crisis of 2008 and 2009, and geopolitical changes connected with the economic crisis. The effect of the worldwide recession on developing countries, with particular focus given to the declining levels of investment, financing, and commodity prices is also explored.

8. **REFLECTIONS ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DEMOCRACY**

Joshua Cohen

Boston Review, March/April 2009, 3 pages

While elections and other institutions of accountability are essential to democracy, their efficacy arguably depends on a complicated, dispersed, ongoing, relatively unstructured public discussion. How does the Internet shape this informal process of discussion—public discourse? The author examines the way in which the Internet is changing democratic discourse and the impact of information technology on the society.

9. **HILLARY'S CHALLENGE**

Michelle Goldberg

The American Prospect, July/August 2009, 4 pages

Promoting women's rights internationally requires an extraordinary balance of strength and delicacy. Michelle Goldberg, a senior correspondent at *The American Prospect*, examines the challenges facing Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in her attempt to advance women's rights in the foreign policy arena.

10. **CRAFTING STRATEGY IN AN AGE OF TRANSITION**

Shawn Brimley

Parameters, Winter 2008-2009, 16 pages

Rising regional powers, energy scarcity, climate change, and failing states are some of the myriad of variables that will combine to form a daunting set of strategic challenges for the Obama Administration. Shawn Brimley, a Fellow at the Center for a New American Security in Washington, examines this troubling strategic inheritance and the changing geopolitical context, and proposes a defense strategy to protect core American interests in an age of transition.

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

11. **IN SEARCH OF AN OBAMA TRADE POLICY**

Claude Barfield and Philip I. Levy

International Economic Outlook#1, August 2009, 9 pages

Claude Barfield and Philip Levy, both resident scholars at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, examine trade policy actions during the first six months of the Obama administration, focusing on thematic implications. According to the authors, the particularly difficult constraints the administration faces are its trade dealings with Congress and what this portends for trade policy in the near future.

12. **MINILATERALISM: THE MAGIC NUMBER TO GET REAL INTERNATIONAL ACTION**

Moisés Naím

Foreign Policy, July/August 2009, 3 pages

According to Moisés Naím, editor-in-chief of *Foreign Policy*, not only globalization is falling out of favor in many countries but multilateralism is going through a crisis too. The need for effective multicountry collaboration on issues such as climate change, nuclear proliferation and pandemics has soared, but related multilateral talks have failed or execution of agreed solutions has stalled. The author proposes what he views as a smarter, more targeted approach that he refers to as minilateralism: bringing to the table the smallest possible number of countries needed to have the largest possible impact on solving a particular problem. Naím notes that agreements reached in smaller groups can provide the foundation on which more-inclusive deals can be subsequently built.

SOCIAL ISSUES & VALUES, EDUCATION & THE ARTS

13. THE PERSISTENCE OF WRITING

Thomas Burkdall

Educause Review, May/June 2009, 3 pages

Is the teaching of writing becoming a more difficult exercise because of the mounting cultural pressures against reading and writing? This article takes a look at how multimedia expression is dominating intellectual discourse, focusing on the future of the written word and its system.

14. LEARNING ACROSS DISTANCE

Kristina Cowan

The Education Digest, May 2009, 5 pages

Virtual-instruction programs are growing rapidly, but the impact on "brick-and-mortar" classrooms is still up in the air. Kristina Cowan, a researcher at Sloan Work and Family Research Network at Boston College, discusses the expansion of virtual education programs, increases in online enrollment, the effectiveness of online classes, and the relationship of online learning and individualized instruction.

15. THE POWER OF PLACE ON CAMPUS

Earl Broussard

The Chronicle of Higher Education, May 1, 2009, 2 pages

According to Earl Broussard, President and co-founder of a Texas landscape-architecture and planning firm, transformation spaces on campuses can help create lasting relationships between students and institutions. He analyzes how landscaping and architectural design can foster an environment that is more conducive to studying and scholarship.

16. 10 ELEMENTS EVERY HIGH SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE

The Education Digest, May 2009, 3 pages

How effective is a high school in educating its students? This article explores 10 key elements that are required to ensure effective high school education, including classes that challenge students and instill key skills, strong relationships between teachers and students and participation of families and the community.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

17. NEW MEDIA TOOLS AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Elliott Schrage

Council on Foreign Relations, May 11, 2009, 4 pages

In this interview, Elliott Schrage, Facebook's Vice President of Global Communications, discusses how governments should think about new media. Schrage outlines a strategy for governments seeking to incorporate online social networking into their public diplomacy efforts with an emphasis on authenticity.

18. **HITTING THE TWEET SPOT**

Barb Palser

American Journalism Review, April/May 2009, 1 page

Barb Palser, director of digital media for McGraw-Hill Broadcasting Co., argues that Twitter is a suitable social media tool to reach elusive and sought-after audiences, such as 18- to 34-year-olds, who are more likely to read a newspaper on a mobile phone or on a website. He explains how news agencies and outlets can use this micro-blogging service to relay information and generate revenue.

19. **TIPPING POINT FOR THE NEW MEDIA**

Arianna Huffington

New Perspectives Quarterly, Summer 2009, 5 pages

Arianna Huffington, editor-in-chief of *The Huffington Post*, takes an in-depth look at whether old media has reached a tipping point wherein new media has vanquished it and presents ideas on how newspapers should relate to the new world of linked content.

20. **WHEN COMPUTERS LEAVE CLASSROOMS, SO DOES BOREDOM**

Jeffrey R. Young

Chronicle of Higher Education, July 24, 2009, 2 pages

According to the author, neither tech-filled "smart" classroom technologies nor computer-assisted classroom activities are a smart approach in teaching. He explains how tech-free classrooms employ more creative teaching methods, and presents ideas on how to engage students without electronic devices.

21. **ALL (ALMOST) ON THE INTERNET**

Barry N. Brown and Paul Piper

Searcher, June 2009, 11 pages

With publishing on the web and open access to journal articles becoming more pervasive every day, the authors explore some of the best freely available information resources for locating journal articles, books, and gray literature on the Internet. A description of their scope, content, and special features is also provided.

22. **TOP 10 THREATS TO COMPUTER SYSTEMS INCLUDE PROFESSORS AND STUDENTS**

Jeffrey R. Young

The Education Digest, May 2009, 4 pages

With a growing number of network professional criminals, security threats such as spam, malware and phishing have become harder to contain. Jeffrey Young, senior writer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, discusses the role that teachers and students play in ensuring computer security at colleges, cautioning that online social networks make students and teachers into vulnerable sources. The author supports education and awareness of good computer hygiene over keeping networks clean and data safe.